



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
BRAVO BATTERY, 1st BATTALION 31st FIELD ARTILLERY
5955 ROTHWELL STREET
FORT SILL, OKLAHOMA 73503-6208

ATSF-KJB

12 June 2014

Dear "Bandit" Parents, Family Members, and Friends:

Hello, I am Captain Austin J. Cross, your Soldier's Battery Commander for Basic Combat Training (BCT) Class 60-14 in the 434th Field Artillery Brigade, Fort Sill, Oklahoma. As you already know, your warrior has safely arrived, in-processed and has already begun their 9 week journey towards becoming a Soldier.

As a member of Bravo Battery, your Soldier is in the good hands of our Battery Cadre. These hard working Noncommissioned Officers and Commissioned Officers make up the most dedicated and professional team in the United States Army. We serve as coaches, teachers, mentors and leaders, whose mission is more than just making sure your Soldier graduates from BCT. Our goal is to provide our Army with well trained, motivated and disciplined Soldiers, who respond to leadership, are focused on teamwork and promote the Warrior Ethos and the Army Values; who demonstrate a winning attitude and are mentally, physically and emotionally prepared for the rigors of combat in order to fight and win on the modern battlefield. We accomplish this mission by providing your Soldier with the most realistic, relevant and best training available. As you will hear first hand from your Soldier, this training will be some of the most strenuous and demanding activities they have ever been through. BCT is not easy, nor should it be. However, every task your Soldier performs will help develop the discipline, self-confidence and knowledge necessary to be a successful Soldier in today's Army.

We consider our Soldiers to be our nation's most precious resource and a key asset of the Army's future. Because of this, your Soldier's development only begins with training. What makes the Army a unique organization and culture is that taking care of Soldiers and their families is our foremost priority. Please know that, like you, we are genuinely concerned about your Soldier's overall health and well-being and we have a number of resources available to alleviate and mitigate any financial, medical, or personal issues.

We in the Battery also know that this is not only your Soldier's first Army experience; it may be yours as well. With that being said, we would also like to welcome you to the Army family. Like your family's values, our seven inherent Army values: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage are rooted deep in tradition and sewn into the very soul of every American Soldier. Your Soldier is currently learning about these values while living by the American Soldier's Creed.

At times, this experience will seem to be very difficult for your Soldier. For many of our younger Soldiers, this is their first time away from everything they know, to include home, family and friends. Naturally, your Soldier misses you as much as you miss them, so I encourage you to write at every opportunity possible. Simply put, **Soldiers love getting mail**. The importance and value of mail to your Soldier is immeasurable during this phase of their career. We ask that you use this venue to encourage your Soldier during their time here, which will

greatly increase morale of your Soldier. We ask for your assistance in this matter and your help is greatly appreciated. Below is the correct mailing address for mail being sent to your Soldier:

(Your Soldier's Rank, Last Name, First Name)
1-31ST FA BN, BRAVO BATTERY, (YOUR SOLDIER'S PLT #)
5955 ROTHWELL STREET
FORT SILL, OK 73503

Our Soldiers are tentatively scheduled to graduate on Friday, August 15th, 2014 at 1:00p.m (LOCAL TIME). I will send you more detailed information in the upcoming weeks, explaining the events you can share with your Soldier prior to graduation, along with a map of the area and list of local hotels for your convenience. We understand that by attending graduation events you are making great sacrifices with your time and money that require adequate planning. Your patience is much appreciated as we work to get the accurate graduation information to you as soon as possible.

Lawton-Fort Sill and our surrounding communities offer a vast array of attractions, activities, and accommodations during your stay. As you may know, Fort Sill is located in southwest Oklahoma and is surrounded by the scenic Wichita Mountains. The Wichita Mountain Wildlife Refuge includes a visitor center and several tourist sites such as the Holy City and historic Meers, OK. Lawton-Fort Sill boasts attractions such as the Great Plains Museum, while offering many restaurants and hotels to choose from. A "must see" is our National Historic Landmark, Old Fort Sill, which includes the original Cavalry Barracks built by the 10th U.S. Cavalry "Buffalo Soldiers" in 1869, and Geronimo's one-time cell at the Guard House. The Fort Sill Museum also offers many rare artifacts and a "Cannon Walk" with a collection of over 200 historic Artillery Pieces. For more information on hotels and the surrounding area, please go onto the internet and view the Lawton Chamber of Commerce website at <http://www.lawtonfortsillchamber.com>.

As you may know, the security levels have been raised at critical installations throughout the United States, including here at Fort Sill, due to the ongoing Global War on Terrorism. Because of this increased threat level, there are multiple restrictions and prohibitions on where and when you can photograph and/or video activities and sights here on Fort Sill. While you are here visiting, it is permissible to photograph and videotape graduation activities, however this permission does not extend to the rest of Fort Sill. While photography is allowed of ceremonies and family or social events, unrestricted videotaping and photography by the public on the installation is prohibited. Photography is also allowed of historical exhibits at the Fort Sill Museum, including those which are outdoors, but not of nearby family quarters and office buildings. You are welcome to bring a camera to the graduation, but please exercise caution and do not point it in the direction of installation facilities, buildings and military equipment which are not part of the graduation activities. In the 1- 31st FA Battalion Area, you may freely photograph or video all family related activities.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. You can also visit our Battery Facebook page under Bravo Battery, 1-31 FA BCT. As always, I will do my very best to assist you in any matter relating to your Soldier. Bandits!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AJC', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end.

AUSTIN J. CROSS
CPT, FA
Commanding

